

Interview with Harold L. Davey

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project
Labor Series

HAROLD L. DAVEY

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Initial interview date: March 14, 1995

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Q: I am Don Kienzle and I have the great pleasure today of interviewing Harold Davey, who was a former labor attach# in the Foreign Service and the long-time Foreign Service Coordinator at the Department of Labor.

Harold, welcome! We are happy that you are willing to give an interview to the Labor Diplomacy Oral History Project..

DAVEY: Thank you, Don. I'm glad to be here.

Q: Would you begin by saying something about your background, your education, your family, and whether you had any labor roots?

DAVEY: Well, my family did not have any labor roots. But when I was at the University of Nebraska, I was also active in politics and we worked with the labor unions and labor leaders. I graduated from the University of Nebraska [with a major] in international affairs, and I came to Washington in 1952 to begin a career with the State Department. At first, I had regular State Department consular officer assignments. But in 1954 the Wriston Report recommended that Foreign Service Officers specialize in something. I was up in

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Toronto at the time, and I decided I wanted to specialize in labor. I made some inquiries through the Foreign Service Institute and through the personnel office as to how one might get into labor work in the Foreign Service. I was advised it wasn't possible for a person who is a Foreign Service Officer to become a labor attach#. The only way to become a labor attach# was to go through lateral entry if you were already a labor expert to start with.

Nonetheless, I did write the Foreign Service Institute for some training materials in the field of labor. I sent out what was called an Operations Memorandum, and the Foreign Service Institute sent it off to the Labor Department, and it fell in the hands of one Jim Taylor. That was about the only time Jim ever gotten such a request from a Foreign Service Officer who wanted training materials in the field of labor. He developed a reading list for me and provided some actual publications. Then I thought maybe I could get a labor assignment after leaving Toronto, but it turned out that I was assigned to Southampton in a counselor job.

But coming through Washington, I made contact with Jim Taylor in the Labor Department. He set up a briefing for me with Herb Weiner, who was a long-time labor attach# on detail to the Labor Department at the time. Herb had been Assistant Labor Attach# in London. He gave me a briefing on the labor movement and labor relations in England.

So when I got to Southampton, England, I did consular work. We also did some weekly and monthly reporting on important events, so there was occasion for some labor reporting. I developed a contact program where we gave some speeches to the Conservative Party, to the Labor Party, and to other groups. I got a number of films from the Embassy including a number of labor films. We would show a film and then have a question and answer period afterwards. At one session-a luncheon with the labor leaders in Southampton-I invited Joe Godson, who was the Labor Attach# at the time, down from London. He gave a nice talk. One of the Labor Party leaders I worked with, Mr. King, later on became a Speaker of the House in the House of Commons.

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So when I was in Southampton, I was still thinking I would like to get a labor assignment at the end of the two-year tour. I had never been to an embassy. I applied to go to an embassy for a labor assignment. Instead, the Department of State assigned me to the University of Wisconsin. They said, "Just what you sort of asked for." I had asked for a small embassy in a north African post, where I could use my French. And so I got Madison, Wisconsin.

I had thought of going [to the University of Wisconsin] to get a Master's in Labor Economics, but I thought it was too expensive to take a one-year stateside assignment. I felt, at the time, that the only thing more expensive than a two-year stateside assignment would be a one-year assignment, where you had only one year to amortize your extra costs. But the Department of State assigned me there anyway. And I asked them if I could get a Master's in Labor Economics while I was there, which I had contemplated before, and they said, "Well, we don't know. You have to ask the Director of the Correspondence Course out there, who will be your boss. You are allowed to work half-time. You are allowed to take courses half-time. It might be too much."

Well, I asked the Director; he was a kindly old soul and said, "Okay. You can go ahead and pursue your Master's program." So, I got my Master's that year at Wisconsin.

Q: But, you weren't assigned to a labor training program per se?

DAVEY: No, I was assigned per se to the grading of the visa correspondence course. And Bruce Millen was a colleague of mine. He was assigned there just to study labor, and he had already been a labor attach# at several posts before. Then when the year was over, I applied for a labor assignment. At one point before, I had bid on Tunis and I bid on it again. The Department of State said, "Well, we've got an assignment for you. It's just what you asked for-Monrovia, Liberia, as a political officer." I said, "Well, it's not exactly what I asked for." Actually, I had been tentatively assigned to Conakry, Guinea, as a labor officer. They said, "That is, you know, French speaking." I said, "Yes, but there is something like

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three hundred inches of rain a year difference. It's not exactly North Africa; it's equatorial Africa." But I was prepared to put all of my sons into boarding school in England in order to go there, when the assignment fell through. Phil Heller, who was a "lateral entry" labor attaché, was assigned there instead of me. That's when they offered me Monrovia. By this time, I had left Madison with this tentative assignment to Conakry and was going through the United States camping through the South. We went down to Little Rock, Arkansas, where just a year earlier Orville Faubus had stood in the door of Central High School trying to prevent integration. I went to an aluminum mine down in Arkansas, because Guinea had a lot of aluminum. But somewhere along the way, I got the word that Conakry was definitely out. The Department of State said, "How about Monrovia?" I said, "Well, how about Tunis?" They said, "Well, you know Tunis is never open."

So I came to Washington still on home leave without any onward assignment. Jim Taylor arranged for me to get a couple of weeks more consultation in Washington. And about this time a vacancy came open in Tunis. The Labor Reporting Officer there, Cliff Nelson, had all of a sudden been assigned to Salisbury, Rhodesia, and left on direct transfer. So I was assigned to Tunis to be the political-labor officer replacing Cliff Nelson. We sent out word that I would like his house, since I had four children, and they arranged for me to get the house much to the chagrin of other people at the Embassy who had had their eyes on this lovely beach house. But the Embassy figured that it would avoid problems just to say, "His replacement has it." So the public affairs officer and economic counselor didn't fight over it, and the post did not have to decide which one to give it to. So I got Nelson's job and his house and his dog and that worked out all right. I got there a week or so before he left and he took me around on consultation.

Before I left Washington, I had a chance to attend a debriefing of a Tunisian labor team that Ike Golden was programming. The team included the heads of number of unions and vice presidents of the Tunisian Labor Confederation. They were in Washington and I was there, and when I got to Tunis, they associated me with their trip, although I had absolutely nothing to do with it. I got the benefit of the good will of the program that Ike Golden and

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others from the Labor Department had arranged. So it was a bonus for me as Political-Labor Officer at the post for the next two years.

Q: Can you put dates on your tour of duty in Tunisia?

DAVEY: I went to Tunis in September 1959 and left in September 1961. Tunisia was an interesting assignment. Of course, Tunisia is a French-speaking post, as I said before, and there was AFL-CIO involvement with Tunisia over the years. So there was a close relationship at the top [of the respective labor movements]. And Tunisia was in the ICFTU. In fact, the ICFTU had some meetings there, which I had an opportunity to report on and to meet Irving Brown. Omar Beku was the head of the ICFTU regional organization at the time of that 1959 meeting in Tunis.

And Tunisia was a leading country in Africa, so there were other Pan-African meetings held there. I remember one UGTT convention, when a lot of people came up to visit. It was during the American elections when Kennedy was elected, and we had a group of people out to our house, some from Kenya and elsewhere. We listened to the returns during the night, and by morning [the outcome] still wasn't sure, so we went back to the UGTT convention. It looked like Kennedy was going to win, but it was still a little bit in doubt. So these were the opportunities that I had in Tunis in the labor field.

On the other hand, there was a problem with an undercurrent of feeling that the Tunisians were too close to the United States. It was sort of a precursor of this question of Moslem fundamentalists that they have today, although it wasn't that at the time. Ahmad Tlili was head of the Tunisian Trade Union Movement. He thought it best not to be too close with the Embassy, because he was accused of being a valet of American imperialism. So because of that feeling, contacts had to be rather limited, and that was on the difficult side.

But we had a few trade union teams come through-like in the trade fair program. It was very useful to program them and arrange talks with others and so on. In fact, as a result of those teams that had come out, when I got back to Washington [and worked in the

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Department of Labor], I requested ten grants in the labor field per year for the whole world, so we could send them out to various regions. I got those grants for a couple of years for the Labor Department to administer. Although we had a couple of special teams come out to Tunisia, we could have used a lot more.

One thing to note on Tunisia, the Tunisian Labor Movement was very active in the area of cooperatives. Habib Achour, who was a leader of the UGTT, although not President at the time, was the head of their cooperative movement, and there was a very interesting way that the Tunisians would use this cooperative movement as an answer for unemployment. One time Bourguiba arbitrarily banned horse-drawn and camel-drawn carts in Tunis during the daylight hours. Animal-drawn carts could only carry from say midnight to 6:00 a.m. during the night. Sort of an overnight thing. Well, the Tunisian answer was for the union to set up a cooperative for these former cart-haulers, teach them how to drive trucks and taxis, and take away from the Italians the taxi licenses, which they had at the time, and then get a loan from the Tunisian Cooperative Association to buy all the trucks they needed, so they had brand new trucks. And one of the strangest things was that it was easier to teach a Tunisian cart driver how to drive a truck than a small taxi, and that was because he was not literate and could not make change for the taxi.

But, this just illustrates how the Tunisian labor movement would try to do things through the cooperatives. Part of our program at the Embassy was to try to get some American cooperative leaders to come out to Tunisia, so that we would have a tie with Tunisia labor cooperatives. In fact, we got a man out there, Glen Noonan, I think, was his name. He and his wife came out and had a very good program, then went on to Kenya as part of an African tour. He died in an automobile accident over in Kenya. But anyway that was part of our effort. We sent in reports on programs like that. I know when I came back to Washington, I found some of this had been incorporated in a book that George Lodge, [Assistant Secretary of Labor for International Labor Affairs], had written called, The

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Plowshares of Democracy, and there was something on the Tunisian experience, which had been cranked in there.

Q: You mentioned that there was a close relationship between the AFL-CIO leadership and the Tunisian trade union leadership.

DAVEY: Yes, Ahmad Tlili.

Q: Could you describe how that worked and was there an AFL-CIO person resident in Tunis?

DAVEY: No, we had no one resident. It worked with occasional visits by [AFL-CIO European Representative] Irving Brown, plus meetings at the ICFTU and [the Tunisian labor leaders] would be invited to the AFL-CIO convention. Of course, it pre-dates, I guess, the merger of] the AFL and the CIO in some ways. In fact, the Tunisians used to claim they might have had a role in bringing the AFL together with the CIO, because Farhat Hashad, who was the first President of the UGTT, was invited to the United States by the AFL to go on a speaking tour. This was before Tunisia had attained independence. And he came to the United States and he was at an AFL meeting and he believes, or his followers believe, that he had a role in the rapprochement between the AFL and the CIO.

But, be that as it may, he did come to the United States and the French, of course, were very unhappy that the AFL had invited this Tunisian labor leader to the United States. But the AFL policy was to do that, and that's one of the reasons that they had the close relations with the UGTT later on after independence, because Irving Brown and George Meany, who was very active in international affairs even before he became [AFL-CIO] president, had this policy.

Q: Did the UGTT have close ties with the French labor movement at all?

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DAVEY: Well, they had some ties even with the CGT, the Communist Union, which, at that time, was the strongest union in France, and some ties with the Force Ouvriere . The Tunisians were very French in every way, and were kind of part and parcel of French culture. Bourguiba used to like to critique Charles De Gaulle and the other French leaders, because Bourguiba was very articulate within the spirit of the French culture.

Farhat Hashad, by the way, was assassinated. Some say by the French Red Hand, which was a sort of pied noir colons ["black foot French colonists"] group. There are pictures of his car with something like a hundred and five machine gun bullets in it. He became the martyr of Tunisian independence, because he was assassinated. Presumably his efforts to get support from the United States and others around the world for Tunisian independence was the reason he drew all this ire from the French colon group. This occurred just before Tunisia got its independence in 1956. There was, of course, a big, big funeral for him in Tunisia.

Q: What was Bourguiba's relationship with the trade union movement?

DAVEY: Well, Bourguiba, the nationalist leader of the country, drew support from all elements-labor, management, academic, and so on. So he had a close relationship with the labor movement and when Bourguiba became President, I used to say that the Tunisian labor movement was not independent. The most it had was varying degrees of autonomy to operate from within government. The Tunisian Labor Confederation President, Ahmad Ben Salah, who later on became the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, tried to set up a separate labor party. But Bourguiba did not want a labor party and a management party; he wanted only one party-what he called the "Neo-Destour Party" or the New Constitution Party. So he opposed this [formation of a labor party] behind the scenes. And the first thing that happened was that Habib Achour, leader of the cooperatives, tried to form his own labor party.

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So all of the sudden there were reports in the Tunisian papers that a rival trade union had been formed in the south of Tunisia by Habib Achour. There was consternation for several days, then UGTT President Ben Salah recognized that Bourguiba and the Party were behind it and he was not strong enough to buck it. So Ben Salah resigned as the head of this other union and they merged back. And Ahmad Tlili was then made President of the combined union. So Bourguiba's relationship with the trade union movement was to use it for support. But he didn't want it to be fully independent and oppose him or anything. After I left, there were more episodic evidences of opposition.

I like to compare Habib Achour to Thomas Becket in English history. Becket was a friend of the king, when the king was a prince. They got along very fine until Becket became the archbishop and he had the ring on his hand and he started acting like the head of the church. And then when Becket disagreed with the king, Becket was murdered.

So, Habib Achour, as I related earlier, had been the loyal Bourguiba follower in helping to oust Ahmad Ben Salah. Later on, when Achour became president of the union, there was another incident. There had been a period of inflation. Bourguiba decided to devalue the currency, but he did not allow wages to rise enough to offset the higher cost of imported goods, which resulted from the devaluation. And so there was agitation in the unions to get more of a wage increase than Bourguiba wanted. Achour was pushing for the union people, the workers, to get a raise in their wages.

In the meantime, there was tension, and then one of Achour's fishing cooperatives had an incident where some Italian tourists were killed. A boat blew up or something. They popped Achour into jail on sort of trumped up charges. Eventually Achour was let out and the thing was eased over.

Q: Was this during your tour in Tunisia?

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DAVEY: No, it was after. I was in the Labor Department at the time working as the Near East and South Asia Area Advisor. I was not in the country. This was years after I had left. And one time about four years ago, I was out in Tunisia on a trip doing a report on exports processing zones, and we arranged to call on Achour. This was during another period of great tension between Achour and Bourguiba.

Now I should say that way back in the 1930s and the 1940s Bourguiba and Achour had worked together in the nationalist movement. Achour was the loyal follower of Bourguiba. I think Achour might have spent more time in French jails than Bourguiba did. Bourguiba was noted for the number of years he had been in prison as a nationalist leader, but Achour was right up there. I don't know which one had the most number of years. So they were companions of the fight from the early days, and these falling outs were difficult. Sometimes, Bourguiba would go off for medical treatment during one of these periods of tension, when he would come back, Achour would be at the airport greeting him along with other dignitaries, and they would embrace, which was a sign, "Okay, we are back together again."

The time when I was there six years ago was another period of tension. Bourguiba was becoming very senile at that point. It was not long before he was deposed by the head of the military. Achour and company were agitating once again for more wages and more independence, so there was a bout going on. I was allowed to meet with Achour just a couple of weeks before he was arrested again. The government had already taken away the union's right for an allocation of wages, the check-off system, and their right to use the place where they worked as a union meeting place. So the government was playing hardball and had formed another rival union to Achour's, trying to bring Achour down. This was typical of the way things worked there in Tunisia.

Q: Didn't Achour go into exile in Geneva or something of that sort?

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DAVEY: I don't remember his going into exile. He was sick and in a hospital, and I think he was relieved [of his union responsibilities]. He was also jailed and people would go down to visit him to make sure he was all right. And I think he is now completely out of house arrest and everything. After all, Bourguiba is gone [and no longer there to charge] Achour. But as a condition of getting out of house arrest and so on, Achour had to eschew any future leadership of the Tunisian trade union movement and he is now effectively retired.

Q: How were your relations within the Embassy in Tunis? Did you get support from the front office for your work as a labor attach#?

DAVEY: Well, I used the title "political-labor" because technically I wasn't the labor attach# at the time. Although I did a lot of labor work, I had other straight political work to do. There was not all that much encouragement from the Embassy. There was sort of a tacit understanding that if I wanted to do labor work and had time, that was fine. There was a recognition by the political section that the labor in Tunisia was very important, and sometimes, the Chief of Political Section would also do some overall reports on Tunisian labor. So there was support for what I did in the labor field and no real opposition. And I didn't have any difficulty. As I said, we were able to get some grants. For one thing, the Trade Fair program which operated out of ILAB (Bureau of International Labor Affairs, US Department of Labor) brought a couple of labor teams to Tunisia, which are very useful. We got a grant for a cooperative leader to come out, so there was some support there. But I did not have enough time to devote to some of the other labor things.

Q: Any other observations that you would like to make about your tour in Tunisia, before we turn to other things?

DAVEY: Well, the last few months there, we were really kind of "under wraps" because the Battle of Bizerte. Bourguiba had provoked the French into attacking Bizerte. He was under a lot of tension due to the lack of economic progress and a feeling bubbling underneath of the people and the workers and so on. He struck out and started agitating to get some

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of that oil that had been discovered on either side of Tunisia in the Sahara. Libya had it, and Algeria had it. Bourguiba looked at the map and he saw that Tunisia came down to a point which made it less and less likely that Tunisia would get any of that oil. So he would developed these theories-He had sort of a “fireside chat” like Roosevelt's-and he would say, “Okay. The Sahara's like a sea, and all the riparian states ought to have an equal right to the oil revenues based on how much frontage they have.” Well, neither Libya nor France, which was running Algeria at that time, thought much of that idea.

Then Bourguiba had another idea that the border should have gone straight down instead of going down to a point. That would have given Tunisia more chance to get oil. And that idea didn't work either. He also tried agitation. He sent Ahmad Tlili with some union and other demonstrators down to the French-Algerian border post on the southern border, and he sent some other workers and demonstrators and women up at Bizerte and tried to block the French base up there.

Well, Bourguiba turned to something that had worked before after the Sakiet Sidi Youssef incident, which occurred just before I arrived there in 1958, when there had been some incursions by Algerians from Tunisia into Algiers. The French had bombed the Algerians on Tunisian territory at Sakiet Sidi Youssef, in what we would call today “hot pursuit.” In the Tunisian papers it was always emphasized that the French used American B-25 airplanes to bomb Tunisia. But anyway, the Tunisians' anger was at the French and so the Tunisians put a blockade on all the French bases inside Tunisia, and there was a world-wide condemnation and so on. In fact, it was sort of like a Berlin blockade. The French had to fly themselves in and out by helicopter. They had a military air base outside Tunis and they had Bizerte. That went on for about six months until they worked out the agreement.

[In this later Bizerte confrontation] Bourguiba thought he could do the same thing with De Gaulle that he had done with the previous French Republic. De Gaulle did not take kindly to the “Drapeau de France” (French flag) being insulted. So, boom! In came the French

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Foreign Legion, and it was quite a slaughter. There were about thirty-four Frenchmen killed and I think about fifteen hundred Tunisian men, women and children.

The Tunisians had American military aid, but they were so leery about American involvement that they never let us have a MAG (Military Assistance Group) or a military training group to teach them how to use and repair the equipment. So they were trying to get out these tanks to go up there that had been in boxes for two years, and the tanks didn't work. They hadn't been maintained and so forth. So after this Battle of Bizerte, our contacts in the labor movement and our contacts with political people were just sort of cut off for the last six weeks or so I was in Tunisia and it was kind of rough.

One other thing I should mention is that Tunisia was quite a pioneer in using US food aid in the Food for Work Program. It started before I arrived. They had a small, like forty-thousand man year, program. Bourguiba was inspired by a Frenchman, Gabriel Ardant, who wrote a book called, *Le Monde en Friche*, which means, "the world lies fallow." His thesis in the book was "Everywhere there is work to be done, and everywhere there are unemployed people that could do the work, but the work is not being done. So why don't we marry the two by giving food [for work], sort of like the CCC" [Civilian Conservation Corps], the US public works program of the 1930's, which was a partial inspiration as well. So Bourguiba asked for some US wheat to be a payment in kind. And they gave them a cash stipend and said [the work done was the equivalent of] 40,000 man years. That's how it started.

Then in November 1959 there was an election campaign for President. I was there at the time. Bourguiba had one Communist opponent, who was going to get like two-tenths of one percent of the vote. During the campaign, Bourguiba promised every Tunisian in the whole country a job in this Food for Work Program. All they had to do was just go to the "governorate," the local administrative authority, apply, and they would be put to work.

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Now Tunisia has used these kinds of work programs in interesting ways, and they have been rather productive. They didn't build roads because the French left a good road network, but they were doing a lot with these programs to build up agriculture. I remember they were planting apricot trees around the hillsides, and it was going to take seven years for the trees to blossom and bear fruit. They were also doing other things in that sort of area and were innovative. And while it was "food for work," the Tunisians couldn't actually use the American wheat, because it was different from what they use. We had the durum and they wanted a kind they could use in their couscous. So they took our wheat, went over to Rome and exchanged it for the type of wheat they liked.

Q: Was this PL 480?

DAVEY: Yes, PL 480, Title 2. That was the food part. But when Bourguiba expanded the program, where was he going to come for the extra like twelve million dollars? You see, first he made the speech, then he had a meeting with the head of our AID Mission and Ambassador, and said, "I promised it. Where is it?" Eventually he got it, and the program was expanded.

So you had something like two hundred thousand people working. You figure the population was four million, which gave them a labor force of about 1.6 million. You had two or three hundred thousand people working on this project. It was a tremendously high percentage of the work force, and I don't think any other countries around the world can match it.

Q: Fifteen to seventeen percent.

DAVEY: Fifteen to seventeen percent of the labor force involved full time. And it was interesting the way this type of program spread around the world. First of all, we had to amend the PL 480 law. The original legislation was a program for emergencies. But, it became evident that chronic economic emergencies were going on long-term. So as a

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result of Tunisian experience, Congress amended PL 480, Title 2, to provide for economic development.

A guy named Williams came over from the AID Mission, Morocco, to examine the Tunisian experience and then go back and try to adapt the program to solve the Moroccan problems. AID sent out an airgram to all the AID missions around the world saying, "Look, here is what Tunisia is doing. Why don't you consider it?"

Several years later, when I was the NEA Area Advisor for the Department of Labor, I went out to East Pakistan, which is now Bangladesh, because they were taking the ideas from this airgram and adapting them very successfully in very innovative ways. For one, they monetized the whole thing; they didn't give them any food, they gave them all cash, but they only did it in the winter months, when there was no rain and therefore no work. When it rained, the people were employed with the crops. But they were unemployed for three or four months during the winter. The government had the people building things like sluice gates to try to regularize the floods, so they could get two rice crops instead of one and a third.

There was a Rural Affairs Academy in Bangladesh headed by a retired Indian civil servant, Dr. Moktar Ahmad Kahn. The Rural Affairs Academy was their version of a land grant college, which did research and taught people. We went out to the academy and it had three levels of accommodation. First of all, there was the free one, where the student provided his own bedding and sheets. Then there was the fifty cents a night accommodation, where the student was provided with a mattress and brought his own sheets. Then we were in the deluxe, one dollar a night accommodations, where they provided both a sheet and a mattress, and a mosquito net.

We went out on a tour to one of the cooperatives there in Bangladesh. People would come in from the cooperatives for training every couple of weeks to the Rural Affairs Academy and go back to their villages and tell others what they had learned about raising chickens,

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etc. By the way, in Tunisia we had a very good chicken-raiser there, Boyd Ivory, who was very successful in getting Tunisians to raise chickens scientifically. The Tunisians would get seven eggs a week from each hen rather than two or three from the scraps that the chickens scrounged around the yard. But that's just to illustrate how the Rural Affairs Academy worked. They took this concept of "Food for Work," did research on it, and applied it very successfully.

Q: In Bangladesh?

DAVEY: In Bangladesh. So those are two of the more successful examples. But the Tunisian one was quite illustrative in that it showed their concern about work, workers, and employment and their use of social and political governmental measures to advance that.

Q: Was the trade union movement involved at all in the Food for Work Program?

DAVEY: No, it was not really involved in that program. The trade union movement supported it, but it was not involved in administering it.

Q: After Tunisia, where did you go?

DAVEY: Well, after Tunisia, I came back to Washington and I was assigned as the Near East and South Asia Area Advisor in the US Department of Labor. At that time, my area of responsibility did not include North Africa, by the way.

Q: You were an employee of the Department of State?

DAVEY: I was with the Department of State. I was on detail to the Department of Labor for one year. Then after one year, I transferred over from the Foreign Service of the State Department to the ILAB [Bureau of International Labor Affairs, US Department of Labor] Civil Service.

Q: And this would have been 1962?

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DAVEY: This would have been 1963 that I transferred. January of 1962 was when I started there. I left Tunis in the fall of 1961, had home leave, and started in January. Then about a year later, I converted to the Civil Service. I had already been the Near East-South Asia Area Advisor for one year, and I had that job until 1971, when I became the Foreign Service Coordinator. Then about ten years later around 1981, I took on both jobs, ILAB Foreign Service Coordinator and NEA Area Advisor. We had a series of labor attach#s detailed to ILAB as the Near East-South Asia Area Advisor, Jim Mattson and Jesse Clear. And when the last one left, we were no longer able to get one from State, so ILAB asked me to take over. This also provided some job security. I got two hats.

Q: This would have been in 1980?

DAVEY: About 1981, when I took over both functions, which I had until I retired in 1995.

Q: Now, you've moved very quickly from 1962 to 1995.

DAVEY: That was just a global look there.

Q: Shall we go back and go step-by-step?

DAVEY: The Near East-South Asia job?

Q: Yes, the major issues that you dealt with and how working relations were in the Department of Labor.

DAVEY: Well, when I arrived, George L.P. Weaver was the Assistant Secretary. That was back when ILAB still had an Assistant Secretary, and Phil Delaney was the Director for a short while at that time of the office in which the area advisors were assigned. Then he went over to the State Department to be the Special Assistant to the Secretary for International Labor Affairs (S/IL). When I arrived, Joaquin Bazan was the Latin American Area Advisor; Jim Hoover, East Asia; Howard Carpenter, Europe; and, Bill Steen, Africa.

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And at that time, we had the Trade Fair Program, which Ike Golden and Don Avery were running with USIA money. It would provide labor delegations to go over to selected trade fairs and would arrange some non-trade fair contacts as well, like the Embassy would set up additional meetings.

So, in that job as NEA Area Advisor, I went on a number of trade fairs including one that first summer to Thessaloniki, Greece. We had a team which included two people from the AFL-CIO who were Greek-speaking and Mary Carres from our ILO office who was Greek-speaking. So we went there to Thessaloniki, and we also had some contacts in the Embassy in Athens and met with the labor leaders there. Our teams would take turns touring around Thessaloniki when we weren't manning the fair.

Q: When you say, "trade fairs," were these organized by the US Department of Commerce primarily?

DAVEY: Yes, that is correct.

Q: And they were designed to sell American products?

DAVEY: And also, by having a labor component there, our concept of American culture was also being "sold." So, trade fair wasn't limited to just selling goods.

Q: How was the labor component presented at these fairs?

DAVEY: Presented?

Q: You had representatives from the Labor Department and the labor movement. Did they simply discuss labor relations in America or what was their role?

DAVEY: Well, usually somebody would give a short talk and we would have a question and answer period. Now, in countries like Greece, we hired some interpreters for the fair. We also made calls on people and some visits. We would go out to a particular trade union

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or job site. The job site might be just to learn and to see how things are going and “show the flag,” so to speak. The calls on the unions were to have some discussions between our labor union delegates and theirs, and they could ask whatever questions they wanted, and our people would ask questions. It was an exchange of information.

Then at the fair grounds, people would come in. [For example], we would show a film periodically, and I can remember the film, “With these Hands,” in Greek. You remember when they scream; well, I heard that thing about twenty-five times. We would have an audience come of union people or labor people and they would see a film and our guys would be up there to answer questions. What about this? What about that? So, that would be the way it would be handled at the trade fair. The other activities would be a little more organized, when you would go out to some group. But even at the trade fair, we would sometimes invite groups in by unions, and schedule something to get them to come in.

Q: And, you worked through the labor attach#?

DAVEY: Yes, or through the labor reporting officer. Yes, the late Orme Wilson was very helpful; he was a very able officer. And it was a difficult thing walking through the political “mine field” between the AFL and the CIO, [or more precisely] the UAW (United Automobile Workers).

Q: Even after the merger of the AFL and the CIO in 1955?

DAVEY: Yes. The UAW still had its own foreign policy. And Vic Reuther [of the UAW] was supporting one faction in the Greek Labor Movement, and Irving Brown, [the European Representative of the AFL-CIO] was supporting another. So we would call on one [Greek labor faction] and they would denounce one part of the AFL-CIO for its support of the other guy and so on. And our trade union guys didn't know what was what.; this was above their heads. So we would just sit there and listen, and say, “Thank you very much.”

Q: Did you try to appear neutral?

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DAVEY: Yes, right, and the Embassy could then report that meeting back to Washington, in this case Orme Wilson. Then up in Thessaloniki there was a different labor reporting officer in the Consulate there, John Owens.

So, as any Area Advisor, I went to some other trade fairs while we were still working at trade fairs. I went to one in Izmir, Turkey, and we also went around to the eastern part of Turkey, as well as to Ankara. I also had one in Sri Lanka. Now, going to Sri Lanka, we had several people from the AFL-CIO. We had one man from the Rubber Workers who had been there several years earlier. He was so successful that he was asked back by the Embassy. He was an Afro-American named Jim Turner with a great gift of making himself at home with you. We also had Les Zosel on that same trip, who was very active in the International Transport Federation for many, many years. He came out of BRAC, the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks. It was a very active international union at the time. In fact, his deputy later on was Jack Otero. Jack succeeded Les in the job when Les left.

[An inspector] went out to Tehran about that time and came back and reported that the Embassy's handling of the labor and commercial functions was the worst of any embassy he had ever inspected. And I can remember that Jim Mattson, who was one of the ILAB Area Advisors on detail [from the Department of State] to the Labor Department, went out there and at one point they wouldn't even let him in the Embassy. He had to wait for a car; he had to stand outside in the rain and it was really a bad show.

We had one good labor officer there, John Rouse, who was a very able officer. He got the labor portfolio at one time and did a very good job. We were out at one of the trade fairs there, and he was doing his best. But normally [the labor function there] was treated as a by-product of the petroleum attach#'s job, because the only part of labor the Embassy was interested in was that dealing with the oil industry. Of course, the petroleum attach# was not normally very well versed in labor things or very much interested in labor, other than maybe labor in the petroleum industry. So, I would say that's an example of the State

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Department interested in the political side and making the assessment that labor was not important, when really maybe it was, at least much more important than State gave it credit for.

In India, our Labor Attach#, Bruce Millen, used to have the problem that the Embassy would say, "Well, the labor movement in India is weak. It may be large, but it's weak." Well, it wasn't even large in terms of the proportion of organized workers. So the Embassy said, "We are not going to waste our concern [on labor]." But it seems to me that in dealing with the largest democratic country in the world, the United States really ought to be interested in what's going on in the labor field, particularly when labor extends beyond the trade unions to the masses and to employment and unemployment problems, which are very important to economic development and US interests.

Q: Do you think the problem was exacerbated by a certain mindset on the part of old line foreign service people in, say, not understanding the importance of grass roots organizations and trade unions in the political process?

DAVEY: Well, I think there are a lot of people that way because of their background, although the Foreign Service has changed so much over the years that "an old line guy" now is not like the old Ivy League guy that used to be in the Foreign Service thirty or forty years ago. The average Foreign Service Officer today probably worked while going to school and didn't pay for his education just from his parents' money. So most Americans in the Foreign Service have had some jobs and had contact with labor.

So, I would say that this feeling that labor isn't all that important in their assessment [may be due to the fact that] these old line or new line officers may be giving labor a hard, critical look, and concluding that labor is not that important to US interests. A lot of them, although they might work [in labor], do not have any specialized training at it. That's one of the reasons why we always try to get people in the Labor Attach# Corps through the promotional procedure, so they will stay in labor work. Since they have had training and

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exposure, they know more about it and are more interested and more sympathetic towards labor than a new person coming in. One of the problems in the Labor Attach# Corps in the last couple of decades is that so many of the officers are coming in because they want an assignment to a particular place, not because they want an assignment as a labor officer. It used to be that a labor officer took the training and then, after that, he got your assignment. Now, it's the other way around. They get their assignment and then they get their training. For a while in the 1960's, labor officers would have a semester course or a year course up to Harvard. Then, while they were in training, their assignment would come up. First, they were committed to labor work; then, later on, they would find out where. Well, now it's the other way around.

For example, an officer-and this has happened many times-wants to go, let's say, to Morocco. He would like to be in the political section at the Embassy in Rabat, but there is no vacancy there. But there is a vacancy as a labor attach# in Casablanca. So, the guy-and this is a true case-bids on the position and gets assigned as Labor Attach# in Casablanca. Now, at this point in his Foreign Service career, he has no labor background, no labor education in the university, no training, no interest, but he does want to be a political officer in Morocco. So he takes [the labor training course at the Foreign Service Institute]. Now it is a seven week course. It used to be one semester. So he goes off and takes the course. And in this case that I was thinking of, a vacancy took place in Rabat while he was in training for Casablanca. So he cancelled his labor assignment to Casablanca, so he could go to Rabat and left us in the lurch. Now we had nobody with any training. Well, why did he drop the assignment? Because he never wanted to be a labor officer in the first place. He was just willing to be a labor officer [to get an assignment to Morocco]. So this is a fundamental problem in the labor attach# program. These people are in and outers, who do not get in to the program in the first place because of any deep interest in labor, but more because of an interest in a particular country and in a political type job in that country.

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Q: What kind of screening process was there in the past? And how did that change over time?

DAVEY: In the past, there used to be several applicants for each labor attach# assignment, not for every post, but often there would be a couple of names. And we could look at the two, and one of them had some labor background; let's say, he had been a labor reporting officer some place, and we could see how well he had done or we would remember. Now when State Personnel sends over proposed assignments to the Labor Department, it's kind of up or down. "Here's a guy passed by State Personnel. What do you think of him?" The Labor Department is not given the choice of any other name. There may be some consideration of other candidates inside the State Department, usually on other grounds [than knowledge and interest in labor]. So, that is the difference in the screening process.

The number of people bidding on labor work is down, even for some important labor attach# jobs. We had Mexico City go vacant for a whole year, when nobody would bid on it. That shows that the [labor] function is [held in] pretty low [regard], because normally you would have lots of bidders for [a position in] Mexico City. So that shows a reluctance to specialize in labor work as a whole, even though we do have the labor cone at the 0-1 to Senior level, and from the OC to the MC level.

Q: At one point Jim Taylor was actively recruiting people for the labor attach# program from the labor movement. At what point in time did that practice stop?

DAVEY: Well, we revived that when Howard Samuel was the Deputy Under Secretary, and we started a program to recruit from the outside. And we went to State Department and they said, "Well, we are trying to hire more EEO candidates. If we could find labor people from the outside who are EEO, then that would expedite things."

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So, we set up a program. We went out to the AFL-CIO and individual unions, and we got ten nominations. We even used Labor Department funds, which Howard Samuel authorized, to bring people in for interviews. There was, for example, a very good guy from New Mexico who came in. We would review their applications and weigh them. One person was appointed in that program, an outstanding officer, Enrique Perez. He was nominated, I think, by Dean Clowes. Enrique, who was in the labor movement at the time, was in a regional office of the Communication Workers Union, I believe, so he got appointed, came in, and they made him a Bolivian desk officer. Well, he went down to La Paz as labor attach# and he had another assignment as a labor attach#. Then State got him away from us into non-labor jobs.

Out of these ten, only one went in the Foreign Service, but over the years we have also had some women [from labor] as EEO candidates we tried to recruit. One or two went in, then sometimes State would lure them away and say, "Okay, you have had an assignment as a labor officer. Now you really ought to broaden yourself and go for political work." So they would take them out of labor like they did Enrique Perez.

Q: Who were the women that were recruited?

DAVEY: Let's see. One woman is in The Hague, Eleanor Raven-Hamilton. She has a hyphenated name. She came in on an EEO appointment from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). We didn't recruit her so much, as she just came in from ETA. We helped recruit Elaine Papazian, who State Personnel persuaded to accept a non-labor post as her first assignment; she later served from 1991-1993 as Labor Attach# in Oslo. Nancy Vancon is one we recruited, but not for labor assignments. She came in as a woman candidate from the ILO unit [in the Department of Labor], but she wasn't recruited to be a labor attach#. ILAB also nominated Jack Muth, who was our employee at the time, and he was sent to Bogota as Labor Attach#. The fact that he had had a long career in

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international labor affairs with the AFL-CIO and the ICFTU, however, was probably the real reason he obtained the labor attach# appointment.

Anyway, the fact that officers are allowed to become labor attach#s just because they want to go to a specific geographic area is a weakness.

Q: Do you see any reversal of that in the near future?

DAVEY: Well, probably not. One thing we used to do is that we would come over to the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), here in the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, and we were invited to talk to [the entering Foreign Service classes]. Then we had a chance to ask them how many had a labor background before they joined the Foreign Service. Some of them had union positions or worked for a regional office of the Labor Department. I would take note of that, so we might call on them again for future assignments. In recent years, FSI hasn't been inviting Labor Department representatives to come over there anymore. I complained to FSI a couple of times. FSI recently did send one person over to us but didn't take step two, which was to invite us back when the person reported to the class. The way FSI did it for a few years was they would select one or two people who would come around to the AFL-CIO, to us, and to the State Department doing the labor component, and then they would report back to the class what international labor is all about. FSI would invite us to sit in and critique. Last time I asked whether I was going to be invited, [and an FSI staff person responded], "Well, I don't know." We never got invited back. So, we have lost the opportunity to spot some of the people who have just taken the Foreign Service exam, passed it, and had a labor background. There are some people out there that have a labor background, and we need to work on finding out who they are.

Q: At any time did either the Labor Department or S/IL try to develop a card file on people who were potentially qualified for labor assignments?

DAVEY: Well, I was doing that. When I would go back [to the Department of Labor after the meetings], I would make a note in my recruitment file that so-and-so said he was in the

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Teamsters Union for five years or worked in the Labor Department regional office for so many years, and then encourage them after their first assignment, which was going to be a junior officer assignment, to bid on a labor position. And I would sometimes ask State in the assignment process, if State didn't have anybody, "What about so-and-so and so-and-so?" And, they would check and say, "Well, so-and-so and so-and-so have already been assigned or the end of their tour isn't coming up this year."

Q: What about the AFL-CIO labor assistance institutes and how they interfaced with both the State Department and the Labor Department in developing countries?

DAVEY: Yes. I worked with the two of them in my area. In North Africa one interfaced with the African-American Labor Center (AALC), whereas in South Asia, it was the Asian-American Free Labor Institute (AAFLI). In my area, we didn't have much with the African group. There would be a few labor visitors from North Africa, and AALC would invite us to go over to meet with them. AALC was more involved with Sub-Saharan Africa, I would say.

Since the AFL-CIO had their own institute and their own program, they didn't need us so much and we didn't have as much involvement. We had a close relationship with the Asian-American Free Labor Institute. With Chuck Grey and Ken Hutchinson, Glenn Halm and I would go over several times a year. They would come over and we would have lunch with them to discuss programs and policies and have an exchange of views and so on, in that area. On North Africa, there was not so much contact. Our African Area Advisor, who covered Sub-Saharan Africa, had a lot more to do with the AALC than I did.

Q: Do you want to say something about the growing importance of workers' rights issues? Workers' rights seem to have become a major theme in the last ten to fifteen years.

DAVEY: Yes, I can remember when Jesse Clear was working for the Assistant Secretary for Human Rights, Pat Derian. And they both actually came out to a labor attach# conference.

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Q: Probably in New Delhi.

DAVEY: In New Delhi. It would have been in 1977 or 1978 because Jimmy Carter became President in 1977, and they made a presentation on human rights, but Jesse, I know, helped. There was a lot of skepticism initially, I think, of the State Department, when Pat Derian started that human rights approach, but it is now pretty much institutionalized in the Annual Human Rights Report in our US concerns. In the Labor Department, it was kind of interesting that when Ronald Reagan became President, Bob Searby, who was our Deputy Under Secretary, got involved in the workers' rights field. They were setting up the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) and Bob Searby was helpful in getting in there in "Title 8," I think it was, a list of labor rights. And they are the same rights that have been put in the GSP legislation. So, it started there, in terms of this [workers' rights] effort, and I think the Labor Department was partly responsible for getting this in the first trade legislation.

Now, Searby opposed putting [labor standards] in GSP on the grounds that trying to extend these standards all around the world was too broad. But there was something special about the Caribbean Basin Initiative in terms of our trading involvement and so on and what we could do there. Nonetheless, it was extended by Congress, and we in the Labor Department and in the State Department have been very much involved in these petitions which have been filed under GSP, particularly where an American union or an American workers' rights or human rights organization filed a petition on a specific country alleging that there had been violations of these enumerated workers' rights-the freedom of association, freedom to bargain collectively and organize; freedom from child labor; freedom from forced labor; and also workers' rights including safety and health and minimum wage.

So, these are the five enumerated areas that are in the GSP legislation. So when the petition is filed, normally by June 1st of the year, then the US Government-Labor, State, Commerce and all the agencies in the Interagency Trade Subcommittee-look to see if a prima facie case is made in the petition. If it is-and they also consult with the embassies

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at this time-then the petition is accepted for review and in the fall, a public hearing is held chaired by the Special Trade Representative (STR), but with the other agencies on there [represented]. Then questions are asked by them of the plaintiff and the defendant, and now days lawyers are very much involved, so the plaintiff will come in with maybe a foot high stack of documents. And the defendant will come in with documents two feet high. Then you have to plow through the documents to see what is new and summarize these allegations and then go back to the Embassy and back and forth until the US Government makes a recommendation to the President in the spring as to whether the government in question is offering these rights. Or, if it is not offering these rights, is it "taking steps" to do so. The President has several options. One of the options is to continue the review, what we call "pend," on the grounds that the government may be taking some steps, but not enough yet. Another option is to dismiss the petition and terminate the review on the grounds that the government has taken steps, or it turned out that the government really wasn't that much in violation to start with, even after the prima facie case was established. A third option is to terminate benefits, and that has happened in a half a dozen cases. Later on, though, the benefits can be restored, if it is found that the government was taking steps in the meantime.

So, this has been useful in some of the smaller countries, but in some of the larger countries, too much was at stake. Other issues are more important than the trade issue. Well, trade may be important, but the workers' rights [aspect] wasn't. It is not a GSP case, but China is an example. Indonesia also is a case where there are serious allegations, but for the US to suspend [Indonesian trade benefits] would be such a political, foreign policy thing, that it would be kind of dicey. So, then the question is whether a country thinks we are serious about [worker rights] since it doesn't think that we are really ever going to suspend benefits. So why grant them the rights?

Q: Have there been many differences of opinion between State and Labor on specific countries?

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DAVEY: Well, that depends on who in the State Department [you are referring to]. There are the labor people in State, and then there are the political and economic people in State. Yes, there are a lot of differences. Usually, on a lot of these tough cases, you will find that the Labor Department is on one side and the other agencies including State are often on the other side. Sometimes, of course, Labor and Commerce might be together. They are on other trade issues, not necessarily on workers' rights issues. But State would normally not be as concerned about workers' rights violations. The Labor Department would say that's because of "clientitism." But, in any event, usually there are differences along those lines. Indonesia, I guess, would be a case in point where the Labor Department would probably want to suspend their privileges and the State Department would say, "No." And there are many other countries kind of in that category.

Q: Okay. Do you want to comment on the Cold War and any labor issues that were highlighted by it?

DAVEY: Of course, the Cold War was such a big issue in the Labor Attach# Corps, when it got started in the 1950s and 1960s. And since it is not such an issue today, one of the problems of the labor attach# program is that many considered it to be primarily concerned in dealing with the Cold War, which it really wasn't. So, having lost that impetus for the labor attach# program, some are very willing to eliminate the whole program on the grounds that there is no more Cold War. But, as was identified in the [joint] statement by the Secretaries [of State and Labor], there are a lot of other interests which the United States has besides the Cold War. But labor attach#s were very useful during that period. Irving Brown wasn't a labor attach#, but, as we all know, Irving Brown was instrumental in Marseille in 1947 [in keeping the port open] when the Marshall Plan was attempting to unload the first shipment of wheat to France. The dockers tried to prevent unloading, and Irving Brown-some have said with US financial assistance-hired some anti-Communist dockers and instead of dumping the wheat into the Mediterranean, it was the Communist Unions which were "dumped" in the Mediterranean. The boycott was broken; the wheat

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was unloaded; and that was the end of any serious effort by the Soviet Union and its Communist allies to stop the Marshall Plan. So, you could say that labor played a very important role right there-although it was not the labor attach#s, but in this case the American labor movement. And, of course, the American labor movement and the labor attach#s were very much involved in the 1950s and the 1960s in trying to promote free trade union leaders through their programs and AID and USIA programs and trade fair programs and so on, which all tried to build up free and democratic trade unions.

The foreign aid legislation says that one of the purposes of United States foreign aid is to build free and democratic trade unions. It is a statutory policy. This is sometimes hard to explain to American businessmen, who are out there [in some foreign country] and the labor attach# is trying to help a union and they think the union is out to oppose them. And many businessmen have protested to ambassadors, "Why is that labor attach# out there?" And they try to get the labor attach# removed or recalled because the labor attach# is out there supporting people who are "anti" this American company, because he is pro-union. So it is kind of hard to explain that sometimes. That's why it's useful to have this legislation that it is statutory policy [to promote free and democratic trade unions].

Q: How many labor attach#s have actually been recalled as a result of some conflict over policy?

DAVEY: Over policy? I don't know. Probably very few. The famous case was Herb Baker in Pakistan. As I understand it, there was a Chinese Communist trade union delegation in town, and the Pakistan Trade Union Federation was having a function and invited the foreign labor attach#s to be there. Well, maybe the function wasn't for the Chinese, but when it turned out that the Chinese showed up, Herb Baker decided he did not want to be on the platform with the Chinese, so he walked out. The Ambassador, when he heard about this, said, "Well, next time don't walk off the platform." And Herb Baker supposedly said, "Well, sir, can I have that in writing?" And the Ambassador took great umbrage that somebody would question that his word was not his bond. The implication was that the

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Ambassador might deny he had ever said that, and Herb, I guess, was trying to cover himself. Anyway, the Ambassador called the State Department and asked that Baker be transferred immediately, which he was, I think, in about twenty-four or forty-eight hours. And a month or two later he ended up in Israel as labor attach#.

So, that was kind of recall, not because of an American firm, but because [of a conflict with] the Ambassador. I remember Herb also almost got recalled when he was down in Brazil. This was in about 1966. Lincoln Gordon, I remember, was the Ambassador to Brazil at the time. And Herb had this habit, which was annoying to the Ambassador. He asked ambassadors what I call a "Herb Baker question." "Well, what percent of your resources are you devoting to labor?" And Herb would apply it to the different programs. For example, AID had a housing program for "X" million dollars. [Herb asked], "Well, how much is going to workers' houses?" Of course, the answer was about zero at the time. So, this would infuriate them, and they would say, "Well, we're all in favor of labor." "Well, then, what percent of your resources are you devoting to labor?" which I thought was a very good question. So the Ambassador, I guess, got tired of this sort of questioning about what percent of the resources was devoted to labor in the various elements of the mission program, and he said, "I want to have Herb Baker recalled." Well, fortunately or unfortunately, Lincoln Gordon got recalled before he could get rid of Herb Baker. Lincoln Gordon was made Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs, and when he became Assistant Secretary, he apparently forgot about Herb. He had other fish to fry and the new ambassador down there did not wish to get rid of Herb. So, there is a guy who got recalled once and almost recalled a second time. He had two ambassadors who wanted to get rid of him.

But, I remember down Argentina-I forget the officer's name-some of the military types wanted to get rid of the labor attach#, because he was "working with the wrong group."

Q: You alluded to Irving Brown and his using, in effect, US covert funds. Do you care to comment on the agency's involvement in the labor function?

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DAVEY: Well, I don't have any direct knowledge about it, of course, but there was a lot about it in the press. You might go back to the 1960s, when they had all the big exposés of the various fronts that were used and the moneys that were filtered down. I don't think I ever had any opportunity to personally see any of that., but obviously, until 1966, there were some cases, although the AFL-CIO always said that money for their direct programs came from their own dues. But there were some labor programs out there in which expenses were funded by these agencies.

Q: Do you think that caused any long-term problems for labor attachés in the field?

DAVEY: Well, I think there was a problem for labor attachés in the field, whether or not there had been any of this, because there was a lot of Communist misinformation or disinformation programs. They didn't need any hard facts on which to base these programs. For example, there were a lot of people around the world who believed that Americans were going down and buying babies for donor organs in Latin America. An American woman was killed last year because of this canard. She was in a village and some woman's child had wandered off. There was an American woman there. The mob attacked the woman. She went in the Fire Department, but they broke in and killed her. And the baby walked out of the woods afterwards. This is just an example of the disinformation the Communists spread around and they willingly do this at all times.

So, I doubt if the real facts about any involvement in some event in years past [had much impact]. We talked about twenty-five years ago. At that time, they were giving money to hold a conference or something just as the Communists were doing with the World Youth Conference and so on. Moneys might come from a CIA front for people to go to [a Western-oriented] youth conference just as moneys came from the Communist Governments for their people to go to the World Youth Conference. I don't know if that's a real problem today.

Q: What about the AFL-CIO's role in the selection of labor attachés?

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DAVEY: Well, they used to be very much involved, I think, before I got in this program, and [earlier before the merger] there was also the AFL and the CIO. The people that Vic Reuther wanted would be different from those the AFL wanted, and, over the years, they used to somehow balance off. I have heard second-hand about that. I would say that after George Meany left, I think there was less involvement by Lane Kirkland in the day-to-day labor attach# assignments. For one thing, the AFL-CIO had their own regional institutes, so they had their own people in the field. It wasn't as vital to them as to who the labor attach# was. Lane Kirkland always said he wanted to support the Labor Attach# Corps and he thought the Labor Attach# Corps was important and should be strengthened because it is very useful for the AFL-CIO to have a labor attach# who is on their side at the embassy.

But I do not think that the AFL-CIO was all that involved in recent years, except on selected assignments. I think in the past they used to sort of vet every assignment, and they would have a lot of them that they didn't like and would favor other labor attach#s. I can remember one time George Weaver, [when he was Assistant Secretary for International Labor Affairs], was proposing a candidate to be labor attach# in Rome, and Meany and company didn't like the candidate, so they prevailed upon the Ambassador of Rome to extend Tom Bowie for another year. The candidate was Lou Silverberg, who had been labor attach# in Tokyo for about nine years. I don't know what they had against Silverberg. Maybe it was just because George Weaver nominated him. So they wrote to the Ambassador, "Don't you think you ought to extend Tom Bowie?" And the Ambassador said, "Okay. Let's extend Tom Bowie another year." So Tom stayed another year, which prevented Lou Silverberg from going

Q: Were there many instances where the AFL-CIO tried to, say, get rid of a labor attach# somewhere?

DAVEY: I don't know if there were many, and I'm trying to think who they might have tried to get rid of. I'm sure there were some, but there were probably more back in the days of Jim Taylor and I'm trying to remember cases that I heard about second hand of people that

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they might have tried to get rid of. I remember we had one that George Weaver was very unhappy with. This was our labor attach# down in New Mexico City. George sent down Ed Silvester, his special assistant, to the trade fair there. Originally they thought George Weaver might go, and the Labor Attach#, Irving Salert, was very upset. Salert was a real labor type, and he was very unhappy with Ed Silvester coming down. He didn't even meet Silvester at the plane. Salert just sort of ignored Silvester and spurned him and so on, and that didn't set very well. So I think they were not unhappy when Irving Salert left Mexico City.

Salert also tried to do in about three of his assistant labor attach#s that were there by writing very negative [officer efficiency] reports on them, including John Doherty, who was doing an excellent job. John tells the story: Some prominent American trade union people were down there, maybe Walter Reuther, meeting with Irv Salert and they saw John Doherty and said, "Oh, come over, John." They wanted to talk to him and then Irv sent him off to get some coffee, sort of dismissing him ignominiously.

When Irv did the efficiency report on Doherty, he marked Doherty down on everything including the category of "doesn't get along with others." Doherty said, "Now listen, in all of my efficiency reports wherever I've been, I've always been ranked very high on "getting along with others." Who don't I get along with?" Irv said, "With me! That's who!"

There have been some labor attach#s, I know, that the Labor Department used to look askance at because they didn't have much of a labor background and so on.

Q: Okay. How about AID and the interaction between the Labor Department and AID?

DAVEY: Well, I mentioned Ben Haskel was a problem. I was not very successful getting AID to develop labor programs that we were interested in. Over the years, I always likened getting the State Department or AID to do something in the international labor area to pushing a wet noodle. It was very hard to get anything done. You give them ideas and they usually turn them down. AID always seemed to have this idea that it's "our money," not the

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US taxpayers' money, but "our money," meaning AID's money to dispense as they wanted. Ben Haskel was not very supportive of labor program proposed by the US Department of Labor. I know we were trying to work to get more manpower training programs in Pakistan. He was not supportive of that.

The most recent case was in Palestine with the Palestinian Authority on the West Bank and Gaza. The Labor Department made a proposal and we met several times with the AID desk and so on, and they turned us down. They had already committed all their money, even before a Declaration of Principle was signed at the White House a year and a half ago. They just weren't interested because it wasn't in their principles, and yet anybody could see that there would be great use to institutionalizing [the relationship between the US Department of Labor and the Palestinians]. There were, I think, programs with the YMCA to train people for jobs and so on, and they had several little programs like that. But I think it would have been useful to institutionalize it so that the labor ministry would have a program, not just for people who are clients in the YMCA program, but they would serve a broader category so training programs would be available for the whole country and that sort of thing. But no, AID has not been very supportive of labor programs in the Near East and South Asia area, I would say, and so the results have not been very good there.

The great success story for the Labor Department in the Near East area has been the VOTRAKON program in Saudi Arabia. The Labor Department got involved when the Saudi government decided it wanted to have a better vocational training program than it was getting from the ILO, and it was willing to spend a great amount of money to have a first-class, tailor-made program, not a borrowed program from somewhere else. Labor Department involvement in that program went on for fifteen or more years. At one point, we had sixty Americans in Saudi Arabia working full time.

Q: Was AID involved, in any way, in that program?

DAVEY: No, no, no. They were not involved. Fortunately, I guess.

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Q: It was ministry to ministry?

DAVEY: Yes, the Treasury Department was involved. Treasury Department set up the overall organization. In fact, I recall it was Secretary of the Treasury Simon that started this special program, I guess, because of the importance of Saudi investment in the currency of the United States. He went off and set up this umbrella organization and then different things under that were done. So, the government to government program was Treasury Department to, I guess, Finance Ministry. And then the labor program came under that.

After that, I remember, [Secretary of State] Kissinger went around trying to set up some little programs. In fact, Iran is one country he went to to set up one, sort of after Simon had stolen the ball from him in Saudi Arabia. He went off to a couple of other countries to set up bilateral programs with the United States.

Q: Were there spinoffs from VOTRAKON?

DAVEY: From VOTRAKON, no. But there was [a bilateral program] for a while in Iran. We tried to get a more direct spinoff from VOTRAKON with the Kuwaitis during the invasion of Kuwait. They were trying to plan [training programs for Kuwaitis living in exile] for after their return, and I guess they did go visit the VOTRAKON program. The Saudis are a little sensitive about visits. The US Government cannot send anybody to see the Saudi program because it is their program. So a third government itself has to ask the Saudis, "May we come see your program?" Also, we cannot send off any materials to a third government from VOTRAKON. If a third government asks for materials, it can probably get them from the Saudis.

In fact, we tried to get Don Dunkle, who is currently a director of our program in Saudi Arabia, to go to Israel with an ILO unit a year and a half ago, but we had to get permission of the Saudi government.

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Q: Fat chance.

DAVEY: They wouldn't agree to it. Yes. You see, it was to go out to the West Bank and Gaza. It wasn't to help the Israeli government. This was under this new program that is being worked on [by the ILO] for the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza and so on. We thought vocational training [would be appropriate]. It was identified by the ILO [as a need]. The ILO does have a role there, and we were trying to get Don Dunkle, with all of his experience, on to the ILO team. Speaking of spinoff from VOTRAKON, that would be a great place for a spinoff.

Now, Bud Clatanoff, who is a Labor Department employee on detail to the International Labor Organization has been involved in this program. But at this point what the Palestinians and ILO would want is for AID to fund a portion of the project. See, if the Labor Department is going to be involved, then we can't get AID to fund anything. So it would be an opportunity, I think, to take some of the lessons we have learned in this VOTRAKON program-which is taking American vocational training, expertise, and adapting them to the Saudi experience-and bring those lessons to bear on other countries in the Middle East. The training is very, very expensive, and if we have learned lessons how to do it quicker and more effectively and we have the training materials and so on, it would be useful to just spin then off to other countries.

Q: But they will not permit use of their training materials?

DAVEY: Well, they would if they were asked.

Q: I see.

DAVEY: Perhaps. They have to be asked. In fact, we were thinking that we could have sort of a King Khalid Training Center at some point and get the Saudis to fund it as part of the money they have pledged to the West Bank and Gaza. They could pledge a vocational

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training center. Whether that'll ever happen, I don't know. The whole thing, as you know, has now been held up by the peace talks.

Q: Okay. Well, let's see. What have we not covered? Have we discussed the relationship between ILAB and S/IL?

DAVEY: A little bit, yes.

Q: Is there more that we should mention?

DAVEY: Oh, I think that relations have usually been good at the working level, despite problems sometimes at the top level, when we have had differences between the principals. Now our problems are more with State Personnel; usually S/IL and ILAB have been on the same side. At one point we had a little problem with Harry Pollak-I guess we haven't mentioned this-on the Foreign Labor Trends program.

I used to write annual labor reports while at the Embassy in Tunis. All the labor attach#s, practically, have to write annual labor reports.

It always seemed like such a waste to spend all that time writing the old classified annual labor report and then have only three people back in Washington read it, the State Department desk officer, the Labor Department [area advisor], and somebody in INR [Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State]. So I started agitating for breaking the report into classified and unclassified sections, so we could publish the unclassified section. Well, I saw, in the meantime, that the Commerce Department got an "Economic Trends Report" series started, in which the embassies would draft the reports and send them to the Commerce Department and they would reproduce and publish it. So I said, "Well, we would like to do the same thing." At the time when I was pushing this idea very hard, Howard Samuel was our Deputy Under Secretary and Dale Good. . .

Q: So, this would have been the late 1970s?

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DAVEY: Yes. 1977 or 1978. Dale Good was the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State and Coordinator International Labor Affairs (S/IL) over in State Department and he just got very unhappy over that idea. He felt the Labor Department would be exploiting the State Department and taking credit for the work of State Department labor officers. So he refused to give us permission to divide the Annual Labor Report into two sections [and publish the unclassified section separately].

So, what Howard Samuel did was to use Labor Department money to hire a number of people to write some country-labor profiles. And Tom Bowie was involved in editing them. Anyway, we hired a number of people, at like fifteen hundred dollars a pop, ex-labor attach#s, to write these profiles.

Q: Like Margaret Plunkett for the paper on Israel?

DAVEY: Like Margaret Plunkett. The papers were edited and so on and published by Labor Department. But they were sort of a one-time shots, and, of course, a couple of years later, they were becoming out of date. The issue [of publishing the unclassified part of the annual labor report] was not resolved. Dale Good left and then Harry Pollak was S/IL. The issue, though, came up again with John Warnock who was S/IL and he said, "Of course. No problem." So we sent out an instruction to the field that henceforth labor officers should do the annual labor report in two sections-a classified section and an unclassified section, which could be published by Labor Department. And that [is how the Foreign Labor Trends reports] began.

Then Reagan was elected President, came into office, and one of the first things he proposed was a cut in budget and a cut in publications. So Jim Taylor said, "Okay. The Labor Department will cut out all our publications. We'll have zero." And that meant that we couldn't even start our new publication, because they set up a new policy that you had to get thirteen approvals to start a new publication. We got Warnock's approval just too late, but we had sent an instruction and people started submitting the unclassified portions of

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their annual labor reports. So I talked to our Information Director in the Labor Department, and he said, "Well, any public information document has to get all these approvals." And I asked, "What's a public information document?" He said, "Well, anything that's done in fifty copies or more." I said, "You mean, if we do them in forty-five copies or less that it is not a public information document? We don't have to get all those approvals?" He said, "Yes, I guess that's a loophole."

So we started reproducing them in forty-five copies, with the idea that if we ever ran out, we would do another forty-five, but we couldn't advertise it as a publication. It was just sort of word of mouth. The people would come in and say, "Hey, do you have any publication on Israeli labor?" "Yes, here's this report done by our Embassy. We've edited it, and here you are." So that went on for several years that way, until word spread up and people heard about it. Then we tackled the question of getting permission-which we did from OMB, and it is now an official publication. So relations with S/IL were vital to that effort, because Dale Good [earlier had opposed it]. I think one of the problems was that Howard Samuel had been so effective in getting so many things done. I think Dale felt he was being upstaged by Howard.

Q: Dale Good had a more passive approach?

DAVEY: Well, he did have a more passive approach and he didn't want that emphasized by contrast, you might say. So we got this thing going, and there are about two hundred and forty or so subscribers around the world, plus about seven hundred so-called depository libraries-each Congressman is allowed to designate a library, which gets GPO publications more or less free, and more than half of those libraries have asked to get this publication regularly. It is now also "on-line" in the Labor Department's bulletin board and the Commerce Department runs an electronic bulletin board called the "National Trade Data Base" (NTDB).

Q: And this can be accessed by modem?

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DAVEY: Yes. Well, the Labor Department bulletin board by telephone and by modem. With the NTDB, people subscribe to it. It is quite a document. They have like a million pages of US government documents that have anything to deal with economics and trade. They have about twenty Commerce Department publications, a couple State Department publications, a couple Labor Department publications and Treasury and so on. And for three hundred and sixty dollars a year, you get two of these CD disks each month. You get the latest foreign labor trends report; you get the latest Commerce Department studies; you get the latest what have you. All of that is on there, and that is done by disk, whereas the Labor Department bulletin board [is by modem] But we have to do the same conversion. It takes a little bit of massaging. You have to put it in what you call the ASCII format. Both of these reports. So now they're available that way. We get a lot of inquiries that come to the Labor Department. It's very handy to say, "Okay. What about wages in such and such a place?" After we started the program some years ago, I added a key labor indicator in the front. Labor attach#s were writing reports and they might say, "Wages went up seventeen percent last year." But the inquiries we got asked, "What are the wages in absolute terms?" So we have thirty-two, thirty-four key labor indicators: economic, population, unemployment, and also several on wages, like what is the wage of the average laborer? The white-collar skilled worker? The white-collar unskilled worker? The skilled mechanic? So those are all listed in there, or at least to the extent that the embassy has reported them, they are listed. Sometimes the embassy will say, "Not Available." We ask for data for the last two years, so the reader will see the trend. That's why we call it the "Labor Trends Report," what's happened in the last year or two. So these reports are very helpful, I think, for us in the Labor Department, because of the hundreds of inquiries we get. We can just mail them the latest Labor Trends Report or tell them about a subscription and some do get it.

Q: So, getting back to S/IL. Any comments on the incumbency of Tony Freeman? You're interaction with S/IL during that period?

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DAVEY: Well, relations were good with Tony during the time I was there. I know that at one point, he and Bob Searby had a sort of parting of the ways the last year or two they were both there. It was sort of a negative feeling on both sides. In looking over the various people [who served as S/IL], the one who fought hardest for the Labor Attach# Corps, while I was there, was John Warnock. And that may have been one of the reasons why he got bounced out. Maybe he stepped on too many toes. Warnock was only there a couple of years, and Eagleburger, I think, got rid of him. Eagleburger was asked, "Why is Warnock going so soon?" And he said, "Well, I think people should stay in these jobs only about two years."

Well, it was interesting that Eagleburger extended Tony Freeman many times after that to about nine or ten years. So I don't think that was the real reason, and to this day I don't know what the real reason was why Warnock left early. But he was a very strong advocate of things and he perhaps angered somebody in his advocacy of Labor Attach# Corps. But on the task force in 1980 and 1981 that he and I were on, he gave a very strong push for these things.

Q: John has agreed to give an interview, so we should know shortly.

DAVEY: Well, maybe he will or won't give you all of the story. Tony Freeman and I have always had different philosophies about the Labor Attach# Corps. Sometimes Tony would say, "Well, maybe you were right, Harold." But Tony's idea was to try to make the labor officer more acceptable to the mainstream by integrating him in the political [function] and making him more valuable and so on, or deemed to be more valuable to everybody else. And I always felt that that's all very good, but when you come down to it, you need structural changes to protect the Labor Attach# Corps and advance its interests-structural changes such as subcones for labor. There is always going to be the problem out there in the Foreign Service that many people are anti-labor. They don't believe in labor as a specialty; and that it is not very important; and they encourage people to get out of it because they think it's a dead end for them to get into it. They don't see labor as being, as

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we say, "a broad specialty," [rather than] a narrow specialty. It's a broad specialty because it cuts across both the political and economic lines. Now the State Department is all of the sudden touting putting political and economic officers altogether in some substantive common corps. Well, we are already there. The labor attach# has already been there, and is still there.

So Tony has usually not bought off on these structural proposals that might protect the Labor Attach# Corps and opted for others, although I don't think it got him anything.

Q: He spent a lot of time over the years trying to protect specific positions.

DAVEY: Yes, he has had to work very hard over there on that and in recent years, he has had to spend a lot of time on human rights. The S/IL office, Tony, Alden Irons, Jack Muth and company, have all spent a lot of time on human rights. That's one of the things that held up our labor attach# task force a year ago. They started to work and then they got into human rights. We lost a valuable four months in getting this report out. It's still not out.

Now Paul Hilburn has to come up with a final draft that will be circulated to everybody.

Q: Well, are there other areas you would like to cover?

DAVEY: No, I think that is enough for now. If we think of something we can add it later.

Q: Okay. Shall we suspend with the option to continue the interview at a later time?

DAVEY: Let us suspend.

Q: Thank you very much, Harold. I appreciate your giving this interview.

DAVEY: You're welcome.

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End of interview